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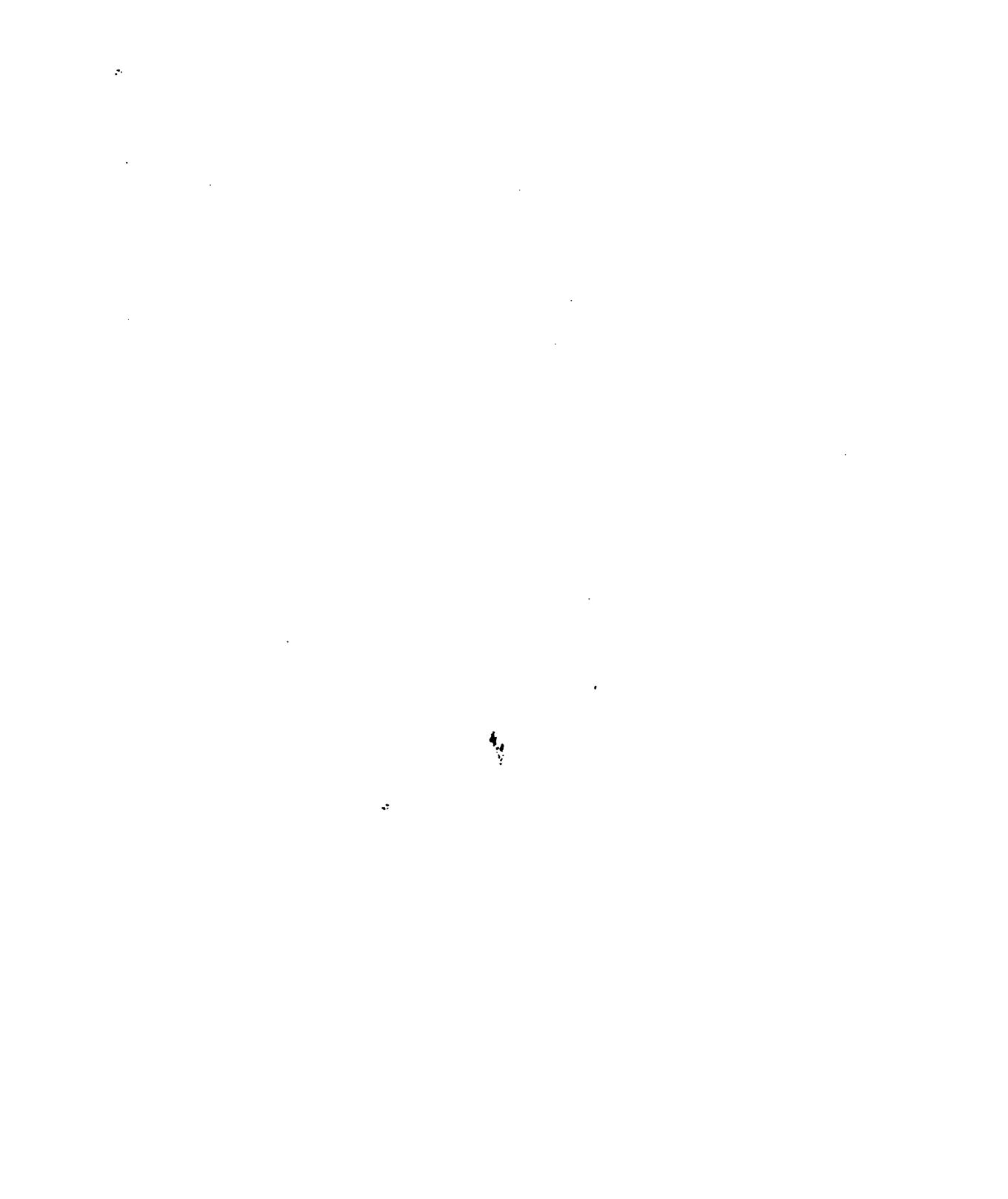
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FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE





MEMORIAL
or
JOSEPH J. GURNEY.

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M. E. F. Wanley

1869.

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A MEMORIAL

OF

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

A MEMORIAL
OF
JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

BY BERNARD BARTON.

"Know ye not there is a Prince and a Great Man fallen this day
in Israel."—2 SAM. iii. 36.

LONDON:
CHARLES GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT.

1847.

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George Nichols found

P R E F A T O R Y N O T E.

THE composition of this brief and very imperfect Memorial, has been to me not less an effort of duty, than a labour of love; each equally urging me to put on record *my own individual impressions* of our departed Friend's Ministerial and Public Character; and my grateful appreciation of both. *As such*, I send them to the Press: it follows, that neither the Society of which he was a distinguished ornament, nor any of its Members are responsible for my Portraiture of him.

B. B.

TO ELIZA P. GURNEY.

I.

THINK not, dear Friend, because my Verse
Hath rather led me to rehearse
 The loss our Church has known ;
That while I seek to pay Her debt,
I for one moment could forget
 Bereavement like thine own !

II.

But sorrow is a holy thing !
And such a sanctity must cling
 Around a grief like thine ;
That I respect it far too much,
Lightly on such a theme to touch,
 In these brief lines of mine.

III.

Yet while thy Husband's public worth
Gives to this feeble tribute birth,
As justly can I prize
Virtues as priceless, pure, and true,
Which their own peaceful halo threw
Round Home's dear sanctities !

IV.

The genial smile, the gentle tone,
The Christian kindness ever shewn
By him to each, and all,
At home—to inmate or to guest,
Put on their brightest and their best
Affection to enthrall.

V.

If there the spell of each seem o'er,
If there they can delight no more,
So potent was their sway :
Cherish'd in memory still they live ;
Nor can the soothing joy they give
With Death itself decay.

VI.

For the dark Grave but holds "in trust"
The relics of the good and just ;
 The Graces these enshrined
Share not the frame's mortality ;
Too heavenly and too pure *to die*,
They leave in living Memory
 Their Monument behind !

A MEMORIAL

OF

J O S E P H J O H N G U R N E Y.

I.

Death and the grave one triumph more have gain'd !
A Prince hath fallen in our poor Israel !
And if, before, we mourned how few remain'd
Of them whose Names were cherish'd as a spell,
And in our heart of hearts were wont to dwell :
One less is left to us of good and great,
Who, skilled to wield the sword invincible,
Hath often " turn'd the battle to the gate ;"
Yet, when the fight was won, could meekly " STAND AND WAIT ! "

II.

But not for this, although the Church must mourn,
And Friends lament for One now gone before,
Beyond Death's dark, inexorable bourn ;
Should we in selfish grief Thy loss deplore,
As those who know not Hope : Thy strife is o'er,
Thy trial ended, and thy journey done ;
Sin, sorrow, suffering cannot harm thee more ;
Thy spotless robe, thy palm-branch thou hast won,
And more than Conqueror art, through God's redeeming Son !

III.

Nor will thy course be profitless to us,
If it instruct us, as it surely ought,
To follow in thy footsteps—knowing thus,
And thus alone, the Victory must be sought ;
That the World's warfare never can be fought
By any worldly weapons of our own,
But by those arms of heavenly temper wrought
In God's eternal armoury alone,
Whereby, arrayed in white, thou stand'st before the Throne.

IV.

If unto Thee peculiarly were given
 A work to do, a mission to fulfil ;
 And thou in both hast well and nobly striven,
 Wielding thy weapons with no earth-born skill,
 Simple Obedience was thy safeguard still !
 Grant that to thee *ten* talents were assign'd,
 Yet each to whom God's high and holy will
 Hath given but *one*, not less should bear in mind
 Obedience in its use, like recompense will find.

V.

Thine was, in truth, no easy path to tread ;
 Eminence, affluence, all that Worldlings deem
 The end of Life—full many a snare had spread ;
 And might have lull'd thee in a fatal dream,
 Hadst thou not known *things are not what they seem* ;
 And like a bird deliver'd from each snare,
 Been shewn by holy Truth's unerring beam,
 There was a Heavenly Crown to win and wear,
 With which no earthly gaud one moment could compare.

VI.

Thus wert thou made a Follower of the Cross !
And strengthened to thy task in heart and limb ;
Accounting all beside as dirt, and dross,
To winning Christ, and being found in Him !
Joy's sensual cup may sparkle at the brim,
And yet the dregs be bitterness below ;
False Glory's wreath look bright, yet soon turn dim,
Distain'd by blood, and tears of human woe ;
Alas ! what seas of both have Heroes made to flow !

VII.

True Soldier of the Cross ! God's Holy Word,
His Heavenly Grace, thine inward eye unseal'd,
To choose the better part ; and both conferr'd
On thee the Spirit's Sword, the Spirit's Shield !
Taught thee that Sword right valiantly to wield ;
'Till, through His power who was thy strength and stay,
Thou wast a Victor in a glorious field,
Whose bloodless triumphs shall endure for aye,
When Earth, and Sea, and Sun shall all have pass'd away !

VIII.

But in thy warfare thou hadst often need
To blend with it sound judgment, and true love ;
Thou hadst to advocate a simple creed !
Taught, as we hold, by Wisdom from above :
“ Wise as the serpent, guileless as the dove,”
Might well thy motto, and thy watch-word be ;
For thou hadst much of error to disprove,
And many a mind from prejudice to free,
Ere some thy aim could guess, or thy true mission see !

IX.

For our small section of the Christian fold
Was, most unjustly, branded with the shame
Of dogmas we had been supposed to hold,
Which hardly left to us a Christian name ;
Though such our early Worthies would disclaim,
And with an earnestness of truth sincere,
In terms as strong as they knew how to frame,
Had striven to prove their Christian title clear
To prize God’s written Word, its mysteries to revere.

X.

But prejudice, and ignorance, on part
 Of others, or on our's a want of skill,
 (Perchance in words) in many a Brother's heart,
 The warmth of Christian fellowship would chill,
 And one true mission given thee to fulfil,
 Was to demonstrate that our Spiritual creed,
 Though lacking outward rites, *was Christian still*,
Held by the Head! and could in spirit feed
 On TRUTHS, whose *visible forms* it *little seem'd to heed*.

XI.

“Without were fightings, and within were fears !”
 While thou, in meekness, held'st thine onward way ;
 But the seed sown by thee, perchance in tears,
 Hath borne some harvest in our later day ;
 Few of our Christian Brethren now gainsay
 Our Christian Faith, however some condemn
 Our negligence of Rites themselves obey ;
 Increasing Charity hath taught to them
 We may *the Casket slight*, yet *reverence THE GEM* !

XII.

To do this well, and wisely, was thy aim ;
Evil and good report have been thy meed !
But far beyond all perishable fame,
And compensation by the World decreed,
Is his, who single-hearted strives to plead
For Gospel Truth in Gospel Love sublime !
The Recompense laid up for those indeed,
Who, while on Earth they journey, Heavenward climb,
Shall be awarded Him, who now hath done with Time.

XIII.

But not by Sect or Shore was limited
A love so boundless, and so vast as thine ;
Flowing from Christ, its copious fountain-head,
It lived along the far extended line
Which links all human-kind ; and could combine
All people, and all lands, in its embrace ;
Earth was to thee one universal shrine,
For Gospel Love to consecrate, through Grace,
By making human hearts Jehovah's dwelling-place.

XIV.

There was a breadth, a largeness in thy soul,
A fulness, richness, amplitude of heart ;
Which no Sectarian limits could control,
To set thee from thy fellow-men apart :
It comprehended Traffic's busy mart,
The Peasant's lowly Cot, the Noble's Hall ;
Love unto God and Man thy only chart,
Poor, rich, learn'd, ignorant, the great, the small,
Thy sympathies could share, for God had made them all !

XV.

The kidnapp'd Slave, the Prisoner in his cell,
The sceptred Monarch in his regal dome ;
The giddy trifler, bound by Fashion's spell ;
The hardy Sailor breasting Ocean's foam ;—
ALL in that heart of thine could find a home,
Whence humble prayer up-rose for all and each ;
Yet though thy love thus far and wide could roam,
It flowed no less to want within its reach,
But there outpour'd its balm in thought, and act, and speech !

XVI.

And often on these errands, by thy side,
A *kindred Spirit*, who erst bore *Thy Name*,
Not less by virtue, than by blood allied ;
With thee upheld the Cross, endured the shame :
The Palace, or the Prison, to both the same ;
Provided deeds of Mercy could be done ;
Here you might wretchedness or vice reclaim ;
There by your Christian meekness might be won
Some votaries of the world a Heavenly course to run.

XVII.

Nor was it less your object and your care,
By breaking up the mind's most barren soil,
The children of the poorest to prepare
For *some* participation in that spoil
Which knowledge offers to the Sons of Toil !
Your true Philanthropy was not content
Into old wounds to pour your wine and oil ;
But in your progress, wheresoe'er ye went,
To *teach* and *train* the young your earnest aid was lent.

XVIII.

And well, I ween, your recompense ye had ;
 Where'er ye trod, *some* flowers their sweets disclose,
 The moral wilderness became more glad,
 The desert places blossom'd as the rose !
 Something was done to soften Slavery's woes ;
 The Prisoner's dungeon caught a transient ray
 Of Light, and Life from Heaven ; and even those
 On whom the Law's last mortal sentence lay,
 Look'd up where crimes and tears shall all be wiped away !

XIX.

If "*lovely in your lives*" you thus appear,
 And both are now from Time and Earth set free,
 The Grave could break no bonds that joined you here,
 Nor "*in your deaths can you divided be* ;"
 Together now ye keep your Jubilee
 In Heaven's high courts, where the angelic choir,
 On Harps of Gold hymning harmoniously,
 Surpassing far Earth's faint and feeble Lyre,
 Sing praises to the Lamb, and His Eternal Sire !

XX.

O that some distant echo of that strain
Could fall upon my wakeful, wistful ear ;
That I might echo upon earth again
The blissful music of that brighter sphere !
But deep humility, and reverent fear,
Bid me from that sweet aspiration turn
Once more to *Thee*, and from thy hallow'd bier,
A humbler wish, a lowlier lesson learn,
As best befit on earth my lingering brief sojourn.

XXI.

Is there who deems that this poor verse of mine
Would any trophy to **THY MERIT** raise ?
Is there who thinks that round a Name like thine
I seek to twine my tributary lays
That they may blossom on to after days ?
He wrongs me much—this hasty wreath is thrown
To wither on thy grave, less in *Thy* praise,
(For thou wouldest rather praise of men disown)
Than in the Praise of Him to whom be Praise alone.

XXII.

His Love, His Mercy, and his saving Grace
For thee thy every Victory achieved ;
And if with thee Obedience still kept pace
With love of Him in whom thy Heart believed,
Thou didst but give what thou hadst first received :
Not unto thee, then, would my Muse accord
Praise which had only humbled thee, or grieved,
Nay, might have been rejected and abhor'd,
As giving unto thee the Glory of thy Lord.

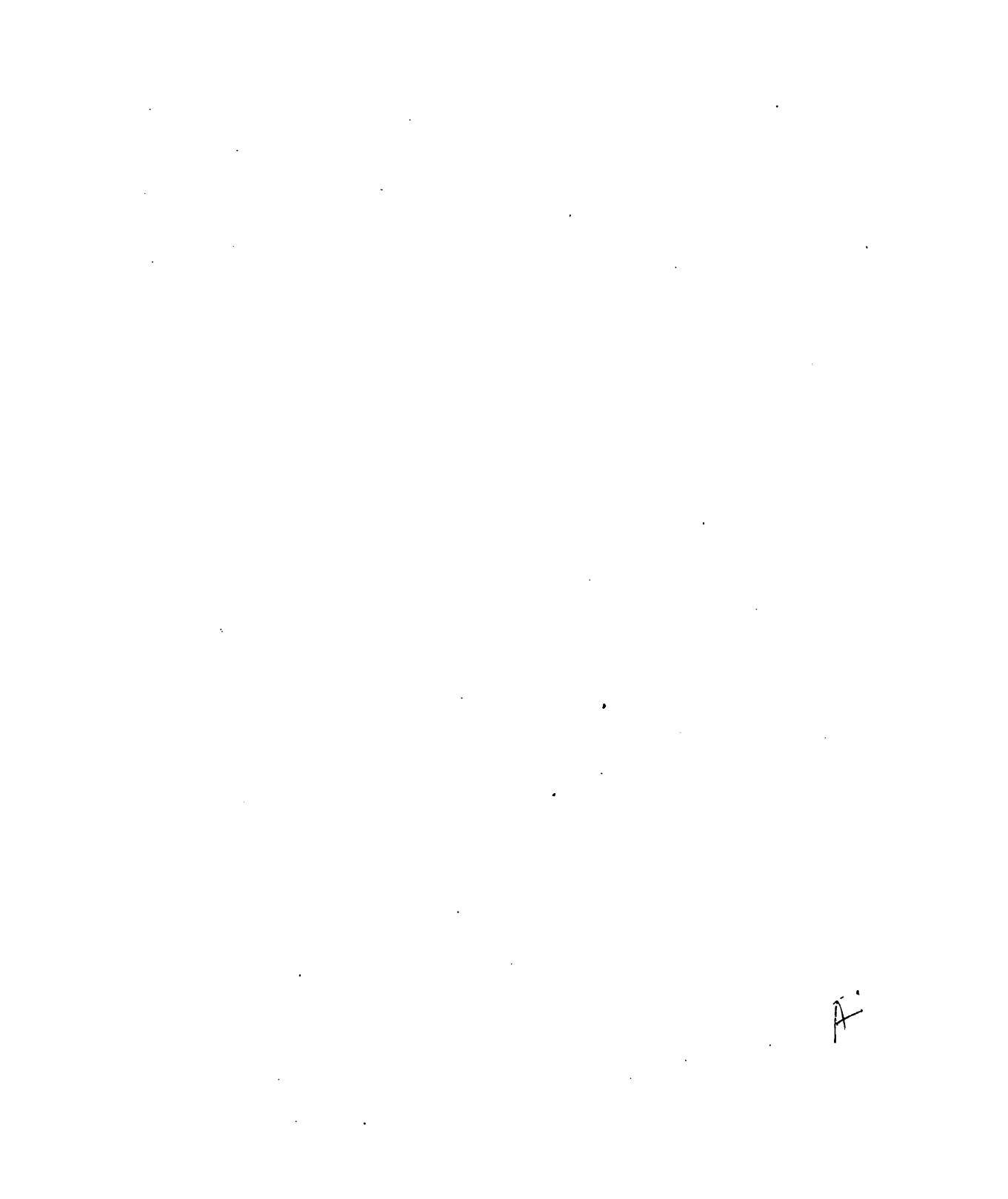
XXIII.

Then Glory, Honour, Thanks, to God on high !
Who made thee what thou wert : *the meed* was won,
Not by thy prowess, or thy mastery,
But by thy trustful faith in His Dear Son !
By this the fight was fought, the race was run,
Thy Hope, and Charity, kept pace with Faith,
And earned for thee those welcome words, “ Well done ;”—
And thou, set free from sorrow, sin, and scathe,
Hast conquered thy last Foe, and triumph'd over Death !

XXIV.

Farewell ! I little thought that I, to whom
Time had allotted some few winters more,
Should live to strew these Verses on thy tomb ;
Would I could offer better from my store !
But humble gifts best suit with givers poor ;
And, poor as are my own, these lines may tell
How deeply I thy Friendship's loss deplore,
How fondly on thy Memory love to dwell,
Farewell ! once more ; a long, on Earth a last Farewell !







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